

To the Supreme Authority  
*The Parliament of the Commonwealth of*  
**ENGLAND:**

A Serious

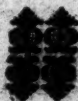
**C H A R G E**  
A N D  
**A C C U S A T I O N**

Against

**M<sup>r</sup> EDW. WINSLOW,**  
One of the Commissioners for Compounding  
at **HABERDASHERS HALL.**

BY

**Capt. WILLIAM BRAY.**



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Imprinted at **L O N D O N.**

**1652.**

To the Supreme Court  
The President of the Commonwealth of

ENGLAND:

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THE HISTORY  
Aug 11 1910

C. H. A. R. G. E.

A. C. C. I. S. A. T. I. O. N.

Against

M. E. D. W. W. E. S. T. O. W.

One of the Commissioners for Compounding

in HABERDASHES, &c.

BY

Capl. W. ILLIAM B. R. A. Y.



Printed at L. O. N.

1855

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To the Supreme Authority,  
*The Parliament of the Commonwealth of*  
ENGLAND, &c.

*Honorable Senators,*

**I** Have always been, according to the light and talent that God hath given me, faithful to the Cause of this Commonwealth: and though I am weak and frail in this life, yet my desire and endeavours hath been, and I hope shall be, not to sin wilfully against God, my own soul, or my neighbour. I am now constrained, by all the obligations of humanity to my self, to appeal for your Justice; that so you mought exercise your Vertue, Reason, and Christianity, on my behalf. I shall present unto you the Case as briefly as I may, in that manner and form as things are; and shall present nothing to you, but what I can make to appear in Judgement-seat.

I have been about two yeers and eight months a Prisoner; and it pleased God, who is just, wise, and

merciful, to stir up the spirit of his Excellency the Lord General *Cromwel*, and some other worthy Members of Parliament, to make a just and truly worthy motion for my release, even at such a time when I judged in my self that my afflictions had even wholly destroyed my bodily health, as well as incumbered me with destruction, by reason of worldly prejudice to my self, indebtments and obligations to friends.

But may it please this honourable Council, that on the first day of *January* instant, I was desired by Cornet *Cheesman* to appear for him on the behalf of the Commonwealth, in order to a Charge exhibited against the Sub-Commissioners of *Berk-shire*, before the Committee at *Haberdashers Hall*, in a matter of many hundred pounds *per annum*, which the Commonwealth had been apparently, negligently, and wilfully defrauded of; as did appear unto me by information, and Judgement by the Depositions of abundance of Witnesses.

And I was further acquainted by the said Cornet *Cheesman*, that, about a year since, he had a hearing of his Cause: and he alleadged unto me, that he was surprised in his Trial, because the Publication and Trial was all in one day, so that he had no time to inform Counsel, or abbreviate his Cause, which he had so deeply engaged in (according to his Oath) against the wilful corruptions of the Sub-Commissioners. I desire not to be tedious; but I appeal to this honourable Council whether this was just, holy, rational, or good.

Secondly, he the said Cornet *Cheesman* informed me, that, by way of recrimination, his adversaries had charged him that was Plaintiff for the Commonwealth, and upon very slender proof, as he informed me, and accordingly did shew me the copies of the Depositions on the Defendants part, the particulars whereof I shall not

not trouble you with, because I hear he intends to present his whole Cause before you. Yet he told me, the Commissioners of *Berk-Shire* had onely some verbal objections, and were continued in their Places; and he, that had appeared for the Commonwealth, was cast out of his Trust.

He informed me, that there were about seventy or more Witnesses examined to the Cause which he first of all began for the Commonwealth; and thereupon desired me to be a friend and assistant unto him.

Whereupon, after I had taken the Engagement in Court, in obedience to your Act (as my judgement and understanding did lead me) I spake on the behalf of the Commonwealth for Cornet *Chesman* the Plaintiff. But may it please this honourable Council, whilst I was composing my self to discharge my trust for the Commonwealth, and, as I conceive, according to my instructions, for the honour of your Authority, one *M<sup>r</sup> Blackgrove*, a Member of Parliament, that did much appear for the accused parties, the Sub-Commissioners, asked me in full and open Court, in the presence of many people, Whether I was not Captain *Bray* the Ranter; but I answered to this effect, that I knew no one in the world could justly accuse me of any such thing; and I did not know any one of the name to be so. Secondly, so far as I ever understood their Opinions, I was contrary in my spirit unto them, and have endeavoured, when I have been called to it, to convince them by principles of Religion and Reason, according to my light and conscience. And truly, let me say and boast as *Paul* did in a senec, and upon an occasion; If I were as free from sin, inwardly and outwardly (for I have no cause to boast, but in the Lord Christ, who was crucified, and is risen) as I am from those acts of conversation that such a people are accused.

cused with, I should have no sin at all. I desire this honourable Council to excuse me, if I vindicate my self, seeing I am so abundantly constrained, for the defence of the Commonwealth, for the honour of your Authority, in which I have reason to comprehend my own preservation.

But may it please this honorable Council, if such sinister questions and cunning illegal accusations shall be given to a man that stands for the cause of the Commonwealth, Who can be innocent? Who may not be politicly and craftily destroyed in his reputation and good name? And to do it in such a cause, in such a time, and indeed unto me, after all my sufferings, and when I had undertaken such a way and resolution in my self, to plead in such causes as I conceived were honest and just, wherein I might do the Commonwealth service, and keep me from an idle state and condition, (which is unfutable to a man) and to preserve me in a state of subsistence, out of duty to mine own body, that I mought not be a lawless and wilful destroyer of my self. And I believe no honest or Christian man can be my chemy for this: for these Reasons made me willing to employ my self in this way. 1. For four or five years before the Wars, I was educated to the understanding of the practice of the Law. 2. I conceived it to be the liberty of an English man, a Christian, and a Rational man. 3. I thought none could rationally deny me that, since I had engaged in the Parliamentary cause.

But further may it please this honourable Council, M. Winslow one of the Commissioners went much higher, tending to over-awe me, and discourage me, (as from the other Commissioners I received no incivility at all,) and manifested so high animosity to me, that he stood up and uttered these words: viz. *Captain Bray, you shall*

*plead*



What more at this Court: Are not you the man that told dangerous opinions? were not you found in bed with two women together, as one Mistress Sency's that was carted?

This was in open Court, this was to one who hath been for your safety, and can prove upon Oath hath been in several engagements (his conscience testifying to that end;) this was in open Court, in the face of an assembly when, according to the Instructions and copies of Depositions given me, I was to plead the interest of the Commonwealth, in faithfulness and duty, against wilful violators of your Ordinances, Rules, Acts, and Instructions. And I appeal to this honourable Council, whether this be not, as much as in him lay, dishonourable to Parliamentary authority, and capital Tyrannie.

But this was from a Commissioner that should shew forth humanity and good example. This was a way to ruine me in all credit and esteem, and to make my life a burthen to me, after the expiration of my imprisonment: whereas it was fully known, I was a prisoner when Mistress Sency was carted. I have been a prisoner almost three years, and was but lately released. I was never in Mistress Sency's habitation in my life. And indeed, this was the way of the corrupt bloody Papists of old, as well as the unconcionable Persecutors in the Primitive times, To make such sinistrous, general, illegal, and destroying accusations; which hath been condemned by this honourable Council, as the Parliamentary Declarations manifest. But of this I shall say no more at present, though I could say much more in it. My cause will speak for it self, and be an object for your Wisdoms and Justice.

When I was coming forth of the Hall, I told M. Blackgrove he did not deal with me like a man, or like a Christian.

lian, or like a Gentleman. He told me he would acquaint the General of me. But I replied, I would acquaint both Parliament and Lord General of him, and I do accordingly tender it to your serious consideration, and do humbly desire that my cause may be acceptable in your sight. I commit my cause to the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, and to your Christian, vertuous, and honourable consideration.

6 February  
1651

William Bray.

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When I was coming forth of the Hall, I told Mr. Blake, gave he did not feel with me, I said, 'or like a Christian'.



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